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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTO DOMINGO 004672

SIPDIS

CODEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [OTRA](#) [DR](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE APPROVAL - CODEL DODD (15-17 AUG)

REF: SECSTATE 173809

1. U.S. Embassy Santo Domingo welcomes and grants country clearance to Senator Christopher J. Dodd to travel to Santo Domingo. The purpose of this trip is to attend the presidential inauguration of President-elect Fernandez from 15-17 August, 2004.

2. Embassy assistance is requested.

3. Hotel Accommodations:

Hotel reservations are confirmed at the Hotel Embajador located on Sarasota Avenue #65. Hotel Embajador contact numbers are as follows:
Tel: (809)221-2131 Fax: (809)532-5306. Per diem in Santo Domingo USD 107 (including taxes). Hotel Room No. is 637 and breakfast is included.

4. Contact with US Embassy Requested:

POC is Stefanie Eye at (809)731-4293, (809)697-1867 (cell), (809)541-4944 (home), (809)731-4335, or eyesb@state.gov. In case of an emergency during visit, including medical, please contact the US Embassy Post One at (809) 221-2171, extension 4398.

5. Travel Documents:

All official visitors are encouraged to enter the Dominican Republic on valid passports, with valid visas. If a visa cannot be obtained before entry into the Dominican Republic, a 30-day visa can be purchased for USD 10.00 in the airport terminal upon arrival. A USD 20.00 airport departure tax is charged to all non-residents leaving the country. Many US carriers include this tax in the ticket price, so please consult your ticket.

6. Monetary Exchange:

Visitors are encouraged to bring sufficient US Dollars cash, traveler's checks or credit cards for cash advances. Many merchants in the DR do not accept US currency in payment for goods and services. Most commercial banks and hotels provide exchange services, with hotels offering slightly less favorable terms than banks. Banco de Reservas, a Dominican commercial bank, offers check cashing and accommodation exchange services in the Embassy from 0900-1535 during official workdays. USG employees are permitted to cash personal checks and can elect to either receive US Dollars or Dominican Pesos. US credit cards, especially Visa and Mastercard, are widely accepted in major cities and tourist areas.

7. Medical Attention:

In the event medical services from Embassy Health professionals are required, visitors will be expected to provide a copy of their orders upon receipt of care. In cases of emergency, please contact Post One at (809) 221-2171, extension 4398 or (809) 731-4398.

8. Country Threat Assessment:

A) Terrorism: The Dominican Republic (DR) is considered a low threat post for terrorism. There are no indigenous terrorist groups operating in the DR. However, transnational terrorism is a possibility due to a number of factors, some of which include porous borders, a culture of corruption, inept police, and the Dominican Republic's support for the war in Iraq. These factors, and others, make the DR a potential target for transnational terrorism.

B) Crime: The Dominican Republic is considered a high threat post for crime. Street robberies, pick pocketing, credit card fraud, ATM fraud, burglaries, and theft from vehicles are all common crimes in the Dominican Republic. If you are the victim of a street robbery, do not resist.

Statistically, everyone who resists robbery is injured. Those who cooperate with robbers, i.e., give them some money, are always left unharmed. To avoid credit card fraud, avoid excessive use of credit cards while in country. Contact your card provider and advise them what charges you will be making while visiting the DR. Keep a close watch over your credit card charges even weeks after leaving the Dominican Republic. Fraudulent charges may not appear until well after you have returned to your place of origin. To avoid ATM fraud, use only ATMs that are located in major hotels, or collocated with banks. Avoid using carros publicos, the least expensive type of taxi. Many travelers have reported being pick pocketed in these vehicles. Use established taxi services, or hotel taxis, which are considered safe.

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